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AWARD OF THE GOLD MEDAL OF THE ROYAL ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY.

At the anniversary meeting of the Royal Astronomical Society on Friday last [February 10, 1899] Mr. FRANK McCLEAN, F. R. S., was awarded the Gold Medal of the Society for his photographic survey of stars in both hemispheres, and other contributions to the advancement of astronomy.—*Nature.*

A NEW SATELLITE OF *SATURN.*

A new satellite of the planet *Saturn* has been discovered by Professor WILLIAM H. PICKERING, at the Harvard College Observatory. This satellite is three and a half times as distant from *Saturn* as *Iapetus*, the outermost satellite hitherto known. The period is about seventeen months, and the magnitude fifteen and a half. The satellite appears upon four plates taken at the Arequipa Station with the Bruce photographic telescope. The last discovery among the satellites of *Saturn* was made half a century ago, in September, 1848, by Professor GEORGE P. BOND, at that time Director of the Harvard College Observatory.

EDWARD C. PICKERING.

HARVARD COLLEGE OBSERVATORY.
March 17, 1899.

A LABORATORY MANUAL IN ASTRONOMY. By MARY E. BYRD, A. B., Director of the Observatory, Smith College. Ginn & Co. Boston, IX + 273 pp. $1.35.

The title of this little book indicates very accurately its aim and scope. It lays no claim to the name of a text-book in astronomy, and gives practically no definitions of astronomical terms nor descriptions of the usual appliances of a working observatory. It is designed to be used in connection with a standard text-book (like YOUNG'S or NEWCOMB'S), in precisely the same manner as a laboratory manual in chemistry or in physics would be used — to suggest, outline, and illustrate experiments to be performed by the student himself.

In her preface the author says: "Whether the study of astronomy is taken up first in secondary schools or colleges, years of experience have convinced me that it is best to devote at least one term to general astronomy and naked-eye observation. An unobstructed place for watching the heavens, a few home-made instruments, and evening hours of laboratory instruction will, I believe, do more to foster a genuine interest in astronomy or prepare for the use of instruments of precision than any amount of text-book study which is supplemented only by desultory star-gazing."

The book has thus grown out of the author's own experience and the needs of her students, and will commend itself to any one who has attempted to teach astronomy to beginners as eminently practical.

The suggestions for beginners in the introductory chapter, respecting the working-list, personal bias, errors, weights, rules for recording, etc., are admirably stated, and may be read and heeded with profit by some who are not beginners. The second chapter describes some simple home-made instruments, and gives directions for their adjustment and use. Then follow chapters on almanacs and maps, celestial globe, and heliotellus, the Sun, the Moon, planets, comets, and shooting stars, stars and Milky Way, and finally a chapter on observations for an inch-and-a-half telescope, and several useful appendixes. In all these chapters a list of suggestive exercises or questions comes first, the answers to which are to be worked out by the students themselves from direct observations or the data furnished by observation.

These exercises have evidently been selected very judiciously, and the suggestions and illustrations that occupy the remaining part of each chapter contain sufficient information to make the book a useful one to an intelligent student, even without the aid of a teacher. One who has worked through it carefully will have a practical grasp of the objects and methods of astronomical work that can be gained so easily in no other way, and will be well prepared to begin work with the ordinary instruments of precision of the observatory.

R. G. A.

March 1, 1899.

ERRATA IN APPENDIX OF AMERICAN EPHEMERIS FOR 1900.

The obliquity of the ecliptic, as given in the Appendix "On the Construction of the American Ephemeris and Nautical Almanac for 1900," is three degrees in error, being this amount too small. On the same page (p. 541) the adopted semi-diameter of the Sun is one minute too large.

W. J. HUSSEY.